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Subject: USS Lead - Press

East Chicago press clips**US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs****February 28, 2017**

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/state-makes-progress-on-east-chicago-emergency-declaration/article_c8fd41-b7c5-5a83-8602-494c9dc6d700.html

State makes progress on East Chicago emergency declaration

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- State officials have completed some of the tasks required as part of an emergency declaration for East Chicago's USS Lead Superfund site in the more than two weeks since it was signed into effect by Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb.

A webpage created by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority lists each of the orders within the declaration, and the authority plans to list status updates under each order, authority spokesman Brad Meadows said.

The page also includes weekly updates on relocation efforts at the West Calumet Housing Complex, which is in one of three residential cleanup areas in the Superfund site. The site includes the entire Calumet neighborhood.

Of the 332 families living at the complex when the city issued a relocation order, 106 remained as of Feb. 22, records show. They are facing a March 31 deadline to move.

A total of 226 families have left the complex, including 212 who moved using federal Housing Choice Voucher assistance, four who moved to other public housing and 10 who moved to unsubsidized private housing.

Residents living in more than 1,000 private properties in the middle and eastern parts of the Calumet neighborhood will not be moving as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency excavates contaminated soil from around their homes.

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority planned to post additional updates about orders it is involved in at the webpage, <http://www.in.gov/myihcda/2630.htm>

IDEM conducts more water testing

East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland said in an interview on WJOB last week he asked the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to assist with further testing to determine "the true state of the water."

IDEM confirmed Monday it is "working to sample East Chicago's water in accordance with procedures in the Safe Drinking Water Act to further verify that East Chicago's water is in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule."

EPA said in December it found elevated lead levels in water at 18 homes after conducting sequential testing at more than 30 homes in the Superfund site. Sequential testing is more robust than the sampling required under the federal Lead and Copper Rule, but is considered by experts to be "the gold standard," said Marc Edwards, a professor at Virginia Tech who was instrumental in bringing to light water problems in Flint, Michigan.

IDEM's Office of Water Quality is coordinating with the East Chicago Water Department to conduct the sampling, an IDEM spokesman said. Compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule is not determined through sequential sampling, but samples must be taken at individual taps, IDEM said.

The EPA said lead in water comes from lead in pipes and insufficient use of corrosion-control chemicals. EPA and city officials have said up to 90 percent of the city's water lines could be lead, and the EPA recommended all water customers use certified filters as a precaution.

The city is working with IDEM to adjust corrosion-control chemical levels. The city also is seeking a \$3 million grant from the Indiana Finance Authority to replace lead pipes, officials said.

Many haven't had blood tested

The Indiana State Department of Health said it sent a request Feb. 22 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture seeking to use funds from the federal Women, Infants and Children program for blood testing at the East Chicago and Hammond WIC clinics. The state has requested a quick response, said Matthew Scotten, health department spokesman.

In a letter to USDA Regional Administrator Tim English, State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams wrote the State Department of Health initially requesting WIC assistance with lead testing in September. The request was renewed following the emergency declaration.

WIC assistance is needed, because only a portion of the population has been tested so far and the clinics serve thousands of residents in the most vulnerable age groups each month, the letter said. The state would provide testing supplies, and WIC funds would be used for clinic staff members' time conducting initial testing.

As of Feb. 17, a total of 2,016 people had their blood tested for lead through Indiana State Department of Health labs, including 396 children younger than 7, Scotten said. East Chicago's population in 2010 was 29,698, including 4,641 residents in the two Census tracts encompassing the Superfund site.

Of those children, 18 had blood lead levels confirmed above 5 micrograms per deciliter, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's action level. None of the children was confirmed above 10 micrograms per deciliter, Scotten said.

Holcomb personally met with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt during last weekend's National Governors Association meeting in Washington to ensure Pruitt was aware of the needs at the USS Lead Superfund site, said Stephanie Wilson, Holcomb's press secretary. The governor planned to follow up on the in-person meeting with a letter to Pruitt, she said.

Copeland must submit by March 5 a written assessment of any additional resources and services needed.

Sincerely,

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